

Message Text

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SUBJ: EDUCATION OF AMERICAN CHILDREN IN ATHENS

1. WITH THE TERMINATION OF HOMEPORTING IN ATHENS A SIGNIFICANT DECLINE IN THE STUDENT POPULATION IN AMERICAN SCHOOLS IN ATHENS WILL OCCUR. THE FULL IMPACT ON THE SCHOOL POPULATION OF THE AGREEMENT TO CLOSE THE ATHENAI AIR BASE HAS NOT YET BEEN MEASURED. NEGOTIATIONS ARE CONTINUING TO DETERMINE WHICH U.S. ACTIVITIES WILL BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE TO FUNCTION. AS A RESULT OF THESE NEGOTIATIONS ADDITIONAL REDUCTION IS ANTICIPATED IN THE NUMBER OF SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN REQUIRING AN AMERICAN EDUCATION. OTHER FACTORS HAVE CAUSED THE OVERALL ENROLLMENT IN AMERICAN SCHOOLS TO DECLINE CONSIDERABLY SINCE LAST SUMMER. THE REPATRIATION OF MILITARY FAMILIES DUE TO THE REDUCTION OF U.S. BASES FURTHER COMPLICATES THIS ALREADY DECLINING ENROLLMENT. THE SCHOOLS ARE MAKING AN EFFORT TO REDUCE THE IMPACT OF DECLINING ENROLLMENT ON SCHOOL PROGRAMS BUT THE COST AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION IS ALWAYS ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY DECLINING ENROLLMENT.

2. THE ANTICIPATED POPULATION FOR NEXT SCHOOL YEAR WILL BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE SAME OR LESS THAN THE POPULATION PRIOR TO THE ADVENT OF

HOMEPORING OVER THREE YEARS AGO. ADDITIONAL FACILITIES SUCH AS THE DOD'S EKALI SCHOOL AND GLYFADA ANNEX WERE INTRODUCED IN CONNECTION WITH HOMEPORING TO MEET THE NEED OF WHAT WAS THEN A GROWING ENROLLMENT. THESE FACILITIES CONTINUE TO OPERATE ALTHOUGH THE NAVY FAMILIES WHOSE ARRIVAL REQUIRED THEIR ACTIVATION WILL BE LEAVING ATHENS BY THE END OF THIS SUMMER. THE ORIGINAL MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN USDESEA AND AMERICAN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS (ACS) IN WHICH THE TWO AGENCIES AGREED THAT USDESEA WOULD PROVIDE FACILITIES FOR GRADES 1-8 (LATER 1-6) AND ACS WOULD EDUCATE DOD 9-12 GRADES (LATER 7-12) EXPIRES AT THE END OF THIS SCHOOL YEAR. A NEW UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THESE TWO AGENCIES MUST BE DEVELOPED.

3. IT APPEARS THAT USDESEA INTENDS TO CONTINUE LEASING SOME FACILITIES IN ATHENS. THE GLYFADA ANNEX IS AN ANNUAL RENEWABLE LEASE WITH A SHORT-TERM NOTICE REQUIRED FOR TERMINATION, AND WE UNDERSTAND THAT USDESEA IS IN THE PROCESS OF RENEWING THEIR LEASE FOR ANOTHER YEAR. THE EKALI LEASE HAS TWO MORE YEARS TO RUN. DURING NEGOTIATIONS ON TERMINATION OF HOMEPORING THE NEGOTIATORS WERE VERY CAREFUL TO INSURE THAT ITS TERMINATION WOULD BE AT GREEK REQUEST AND THEREBY CONSTITUTE A FORCE MAJEURE SITUATION ALLOWING FOR THE LEGAL BREAKING OF THE EKALI AND OTHER LEASES. USDESEA, HOWEVER, FOR REASONS YET UNKNOWN, REPORTEDLY IS STILL CONTEMPLATING THE RETENTION OF THE EKALI SCHOOL EVEN THOUGH ACS HAS MORE THAN ADEQUATE SPACE TO MEET THE EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS AT LOWER COST TO THE GOVERNMENT WHEN TUITION, COST OF FACILITIES, ETC. ARE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. THE NEED TO LEASE SCHOOL FACILITIES IN ATHENS TO MEET THE NEED OF HOMEPORING AND AN INCREASING U.S. PRESENCE IN ATHENS HAS NOW BEEN OBIATED BY RECENT EVENTS. THE RETENTION OF THESE FACILITIES AFTER A REVERSAL OF HOMEPORING AND A GENERAL DECLINE IN U.S. PRESENCE WOULD IN EFFECT DECENTRALIZE WHEN DECENTRALIZATION IS NO LONGER DESIRABLE OR ECONOMICALLY BENEFICIAL. EFFORTS ARE BEING MADE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL TO REACH AN ACCOMMODATION THAT WILL HAVE MINIMAL ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES AVAILABLE TO THE U.S. CITIZENS REMAINING IN GREECE AFTER COMPLETION OF BASE NEGOTIATIONS.

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4. WE HAVE STRONG RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE WISDOM OR DESIRABILITY OF MAINTAINING EXPENSIVE PROPERTIES WHICH ARE UNNEEDED AND WOULD BE UNDERUTILIZED. NOT ONLY WOULD THIS APPEAR TO BE A WASTE OF DOD FUNDS BUT IT WOULD ALSO TEND TO MAINTAIN A HIGH PROFILE WHICH THE GOG HAS STATED ITS DESIRE TO LOWER.
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